

C.A.L.M.S. Dysregulation Protocol™

This step-by-step approach helps parents stay calm, understand triggers, and teach children effective coping skills to manage emotions together.

C Co-Regulate First

Stay calm to help your child feel secure and mirror your regulation.

Example: During a tantrum, take a deep breath, speak softly, and avoid reacting.

Action: Practice deep breathing when your child is upset, showing them how to handle big emotions.

Tip: If overwhelmed, take a moment to calm yourself before re-engaging.



A - Avoid Personalizing

Understand that your child's outburst isn't directed at you; it's an expression of dysregulation.

Example: If your child says hurtful things, remember it's their emotion, not their true feelings.

Action: Remind yourself, "It's their dysregulation," to respond with empathy.

Tip: Repeat a calming phrase like, "This isn't about me, it's their emotion."



L - Look for Root Causes

Identify triggers, like frustration or hunger, that drive their reactions.

Example: Upset over homework may be due to anxiety or difficulty with a task.

Action: Look for patterns in your child's behavior to understand triggers.

Tip: Keep a simple journal to spot patterns, noting events before and after outbursts.



M - Model Coping Strategies

Show your child how to manage emotions by modeling healthy responses.

Example: Say, "I'm going to take a deep breath to calm down," to model handling stress.

Action: Use simple coping techniques, like breathing exercises, and invite your child to join.

Tip: Practice these techniques together during calm times.



S - Support and Reinforce

Praise your child when they use coping strategies, reinforcing their progress.

Example: After they calm down, say, "I'm proud of how you managed your feelings."

Action: Give specific praise to reinforce what worked.

Tip: Use phrases like, "You did a great job taking a deep breath," to reinforce success.

